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UNCLAS LILONGWE 000981

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: BY-ELECTIONS RESCHEDULED

1. THE MALAWI ELECTORAL COMMISSION (MEC) HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE EIGHT BY-ELECTIONS THAT WERE ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE THIS MONTH HAVE BEEN SHIFTED TO JANUARY 11, 2005. THE OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN PERIOD IS NOW SET TO BEGIN ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2004 AND END ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 2005. VOTER REGISTRATION AND VERIFICATION OF THE VOTERS ROLLS IS SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE FROM MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1 TO FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2004.

2. THE BY-ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE IN EIGHT DIFFERENT CONSTITUENCIES. IN SIX OF THESE CONSTITUENCIES THE BY-ELECTIONS ARE THE RESULT OF CANCELLATION OF VOTING DURING THE MAY ELECTIONS DUE TO VARIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL PROBLEMS. PRESIDENT MUTHARIKA AND VICE PRESIDENT CHILUMPHA WERE ELECTED MPS IN TWO OF THE EIGHT CONSTITUENCIES; HOWEVER, THE MALAWI CONSTITUTION DOES NOT ALLOW A PRESIDENT OR VICE PRESIDENT TO ALSO SERVE AS A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

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